

DOCUMENTS
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,
RELATING
TO THE NAVY
OF
THE UNITED STATES.

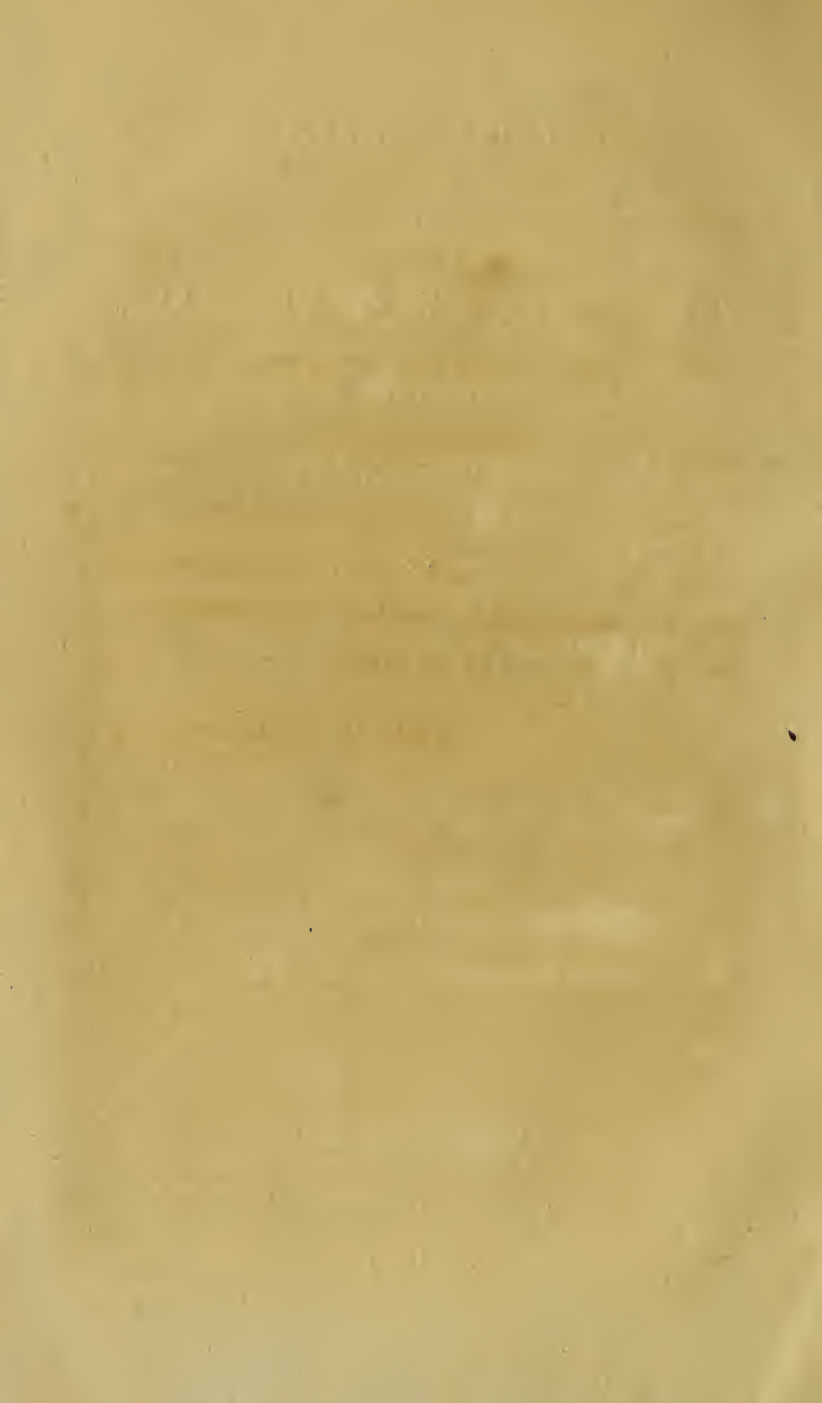
MARCH 18, 1814.

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1814.



IN SENATE
OF
THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 18th, 1814.

Mr. Gaillard communicated the following documents, which, on his motion, were ordered to be printed for the use of the senate.

Attest,

SAM. A. OTIS. *secretary.*

DOCUMENTS.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

FEBRUARY 22d, 1814.

SIR,

I have the honor to submit the following, in answer to your letter of the 20th December last.

Three ships of 74 guns each, and of the largest class, are now building, of prime materials, and in the most substantial and durable manner, viz.: one at Portsmouth, N. H., one at Charlestown, Mass., and one at Philadelphia. The two former, it is expected, will be launched in the month of July, and the latter in the month of December next.

Three ships of 44 guns each, of the largest class, are also building, of durable materials, in the best manner, viz.: one at Philadelphia, one at Baltimore, and one at the navy yard in this city. The two former, it is expected, will be launched by the middle of April, and the latter, in all the month of July next.

The six sloops of war, authorised by law, have all been built, in the most substantial manner, and of good materials. Two of which are ready for sea; three more have nearly completed their crews, and will, probably, be ready for sea in ten or twelve days, and the sixth is now equipping at the navy yard in this city.

Six barges have been purchased at Philadelphia; also, four at Baltimore, and one at Norfolk.

Eight have been built at Baltimore; ten are nearly completed on the Eastern Shore of Maryland;

four have been built, and one is now building at the navy yard in this city; five are building at Charleston, S. C.; six at St. Mary's, Georgia; and preparatory measures are now in operation to increase the force in North Carolina, and at New Orleans, in vessels of this description, as fast as men can be procured to man them.

Previous to the year 1813, it appears that no timber had been procured under the act of March 30th, 1812; but early in the year 1813, timber to the amount of 23,000 dollars, was purchased at Baltimore, under the act of March 30th, 1812, "suitable for rebuilding the frigates Philadelphia, General Greene, New York, and Boston;" but as there is no appropriation or authority to rebuild those frigates, and as the Philadelphia is not in existence, and the General Green, New York, and Boston, are rotten, worthless hulks, that would cost much more, in proportion to their value, to rebuild them than to build new frigates, of a better class, and vastly superior construction, a part of that timber has been applied to the building of the 44 and the sloops of war at Baltimore, and the 74 and 44 at Philadelphia.

Contracts for, and purchases of, timber, to a very considerable amount, have been made for naval purposes during the year 1813; but which have not been charged to the particular appropriation of the 30th of March, 1812, though applied to the same purposes as timber chargeable to that appropriation would have been, viz: in building the three 74's, at Portsmouth, Charlestown, and Philadelphia, the 44 gun ship at the latter place, and the 44 and sloop of war at the navy yard in this city; also, in the repairs of the ships of the navy, and in preparing several sets of spare masts, spars, tops, &c. &c. ready for the ships which may return damaged; and the residue is applicable to similar purposes.

These have been charged, either under the head of repairs, or to the appropriation for building 74's and frigates; which appropriations, it is conceived, are properly chargeable with timber purchased for those purposes. Six cargoes, amounting to twenty six hundred tons, of Georgia yellow pine timber, which had been cut for the use of the British navy, but entered the eastern ports of the United States, on account of the war, have been purchased, on favorable terms; also, a prize cargo of northern timber. These are properly chargeable to the annual appropriation for the purchase of timber. A contract was made, in August last, for the delivery, at Norfolk and this place, of a quantity of yellow pine plank, thick stuff, beams, and mast pieces, sufficient for two ships of 74 guns each, and two 44 gun frigates. The timber, under this contract, is now delivering. Contracts for timber, yet to be delivered, have been made at the eastern stations, the particulars of which are not yet in the department. A recent contract has been made at Philadelphia, for white oak plank, thick stuff, beams, and knees; and for yellow pine plank, and beams, sufficient for a 74 and a 44 gun ship; and for fifty sticks of yellow pine for masts and spars. These are chargeable upon the appropriation of the 30th of March, 1812.

No contracts for live oak timber have yet been made, as the transportation is impracticable under existing circumstances; and if collected in considerable quantities at landings accessible to vessels fit for transportation, they would be equally so to the enemy, and the timber, when collected, would be liable to destruction. As live oak is exclusively applied to the frame of timbers, which constitute the form and mould of the ship, it is necessary that the timber should be cut and shaped, not

only to the particular curve for which each piece is designed, but to its true oblique dimensions; otherwise great waste in the conversion, and expense in transportation will ensue; for this purpose it is necessary that draughts or designs of the contemplated ships should be determined, proper moulds made by which to cut and shape the timber, and mechanics employed to superintend the execution of the contracts. Hence, contracts for timber of this description cannot be made and executed with the same facility and certainty as for straight rectangular timber.

It is, therefore, considered that a state of peace will be much more favorable to the collection of a stock of timber of this description than that of war, in which it can neither be transported to the dock yards nor deposited in safety at the seacoast landings. Nevertheless it is contemplated to make the necessary arrangements for such supplies of suitable live oak timber as may be had in places of safety.

On this subject it is very satisfactory to learn, that our resources in timber of this kind are greatly extended, in the abundance which may be procured from the shores of the bays and waters near the mouth of the Mississippi. This species of timber requires very little seasoning; six months' docking will render it perfectly fit for use.

No further steps have been taken in relation to the dock yards, than general inquiry and proper deliberation, in order to determine upon the best site in a central situation.

The result has decided in favor of the right bank of the Hudson, above the highlands. The motives to this decision were, from considering the contemplated dock yard as the nucleus around which a great naval establishment may be formed,

comprising wet and dry docks, forges, founderies, boring, rolling, saw, and block mills, blast and smelting furnaces, an armory, hydraulic engines, rope works, manufactories of sail-duck, and work shops of all kinds, which will require a copious head of water, readily commanded in this vicinity. Here also, will be the main arsenal and depot of timber, and materials of all kinds, and the principal dock yard for constructing and repairing ships of war. Such an establishment in any of our seaports, accessible to ships of the line, would form so great a temptation to a powerful enemy as to render destruction certain, unless protected by forts and garrisons of the most formidable and expensive nature.

The natural defences at the pass of the highlands, are such as to remove all doubt on this subject, and supersede the necessity of a large protecting force.

The Hudson is a deep, bold, noble stream, of easy and safe navigation. The surrounding country produces abundance of iron, and large quantities of hemp; and the banks of the Hudson furnish a variety of timber fit for naval purposes. The communication with the northern and western lakes, is more direct and favorable to the distribution of naval and military stores than any other situation that can be selected. The only objection of importance that I have heard suggested, is, that the Hudson at this point is closed by the ice a fortnight sooner, and opens a fortnight later, than at New York; but this objection is greatly overbalanced by the extraordinary advantages of the situation.

In order to select the most suitable situation, a careful examination and survey, under the direction of some of our most experienced officers,

aided by a skilful engineer, appears to be indispensable, an opportunity for which has been prevented by the active operations of the war, and consequent occupation of the officers best qualified for this service.

The number of seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys, authorised by law, is indefinite and discretionary with the president, as will appear by the following reference:

The act of congress of the 21st of April, 1806, vol. 8, page 109, limits the officers, seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys, to

13 captains,

9 masters commandant,

72 lieutenants,

150 midshipmen, and

925 seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys.

The act of the same date, page 142, authorises the president to man and equip the gunboats.

The act of the 3d of March, 1807, vol. 8, page 307, authorises the employment of 500 additional seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys.

The act of the 31st of January, 1809, vol. 9, page 206, authorises the employment of 300 additional midshipmen, and 3,600 additional seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys.

The act of the 30th of March, 1812, vol. 11, page 89, authorises officers and seamen of the navy to be increased so far as may be necessary to officer, man, and equip the vessels to be put in service.

The act of the 2d of January, 1813, page 340, provides for the building, officering, and manning, four 74's and six frigates.

The act of the 3d of March, 1813, page 429, authorises the president to build six sloops of war, and to build, or procure, such a number of sloops

of war, or other armed vessels on the lakes, as the public service may require; and to appoint such officers, and to employ the number of seamen, as may be necessary for such vessels as are authorised by law to be put in commission.

The act of the 5th of July, 1813, vol. 12, page 10, authorises the president to cause to be built, equipped, and manned, such number of barges as he may deem necessary.

There is no correct data in the department, by which to ascertain the actual number of seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys, employed at any one period. The longest period of enlistment being for two years, and in many cases for the flotilla service, for a shorter period; the number is constantly fluctuating, and, consequently, cannot be correctly ascertained; but it is believed, from a general view of the subject by the accountant and myself, that the number employed during the year 1813, has considerably exceeded the estimate for that year.

There is not at this time, in the department, sufficient data upon which to estimate the number of gunboats actually fit for service; some have undergone partial repairs, while others have deteriorated.

The following will show the number on each station, and their presumed condition, viz.:

		Gunboats.
Portsmouth, N. H.	in service	6
Newburyport,	do.	2
Boston,	do.	2
Rhode Island,	do.	9
New London,	do.	2
New York,	do.	31

In ordinary, fit for service 7

—38

Delaware Bay,	in service	7
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In ordinary, fit for service 12

—19

Baltimore,	in service	1
Potomac,	do	3
Norfolk, in service, and ready for service but very lightly manned—recruiting as men offer,		23
North Carolina,	in service	6
South Carolina,	do.	3
Georgia,	do.	5
New Orleans,	do.	6
		<hr/>
		125

When it is considered that six large sloops of war have been built, equipped, and manned, in our seaports, and three sloops of war and one ship of 26 guns on the lakes, within the preceding eight months; that three 74's and three 44's will be added this year, but *which are yet to be manned*, and that provision still exists for building one 74 and three 44's as soon as suitable materials can be had; it appears to me that any further provision at present for the increase of our naval force, would not add to its efficiency, and therefore, is not necessary; except such as I have suggested in my letter to the chairman of the naval committee of the house of representatives, a copy of which I have the honor to enclose; and even of that description, the number ought to be *very moderate*, when the contemplated increase of our force on the lakes, and the demand for experienced officers and seamen, which the very rapid augmentation of our force has created, are taken into view. The flotilla service, moreover, is still very deficient in men. We may readily and rapidly add any reasonable number of vessels to our force, but their armament and many important parts of their equipment of every description, will be to fabricate. The cannon foundries are few in number, and none of

any note north of the waters of the Chesapeake. These have been, are now, and will be fully engaged during the present year, in fabricating the ordnance required for the force already authorised. The private armed vessels cannot at this time procure their armament of a proper kind on any terms.

With the rapid increase of our naval force, the promotion of young officers has been *necessarily very rapid*; and those whose experience and talents have exalted our flag are comparatively few in number. Therefore, however desirable it may be to give the senior lieutenants separate commands in which they would be useful to their country and acquire honor to themselves, it will leave our 74's and frigates, and squadrons on the lakes without officers of sufficient experience. This has been a subject of serious solicitude with some of our commanders; and the tenacious policy of our naval system precludes the admission of talent and experience from any other source than lineal promotion. It is true sailing masters have been promoted to lieutenants, under special circumstances; and I perceive no good reason why this experienced and valuable class of officers should not be as regularly entitled to promotion as midshipmen.

With these views the honorable committee will be enabled to appreciate the arguments which I have deemed it proper to offer for their consideration.

I also beg leave to suggest the propriety of augmenting the marine corps from the present establishment 1,869, to 2,652, and to increase the number of commissioned officers in the same proportion as in the infantry of the army.

It is not necessary to recal the recollection of

the honorable committee to the gallant part this distinguished corps has acted in all the noble victories which have been achieved; nor to its character for discipline, valor, and patient endurance, of the most severe service on the lakes, in which it has suffered excessively; suffice it to say, that it is not surpassed by any body of men in the service of the United States though seen only in the back ground of the picture, and without the ordinary inducements to noble actions—a reasonable prospect of promotion, with a sprig of the laurel which it may help to gather. The augmentation which I recommend, will be actually necessary for the force now authorised, as will be illustrated by the estimate which accompanies this. This corps is, moreover, exceedingly useful at our several naval stations, and from its amphibious character calculated to render important services in every situation.

We have a right, sir, to anticipate during the ensuing summer, the most urgent occasion for the vigorous employment of the flotilla for the defence of the waters of the United States; and it has become a very interesting question, how that force is to be commanded with the best effect. That service is, at best, unpopular with the regular officers of the navy; and the services of those officers, who are qualified for separate command are required to meet the increased demand for the regular naval force, particularly on the lakes, which is very pressing. Those officers who are deficient in experience, are justly averse to the flotilla service; because they can acquire but very little useful professional knowledge; and indeed, it is a service in which those, who are to form the officers for the ships of war, ought not to be engaged.

There are other intrinsic difficulties in this ser-

vice which are unknown on board our ships of war. The temptations to insubordination and vice are much greater in this scattered and amphibious kind of force; and the rigors of naval discipline, unless tempered with judgment and great moderation, discourage the recruiting for this service.

Bay and river-craft men, seamen, ordinary seamen who have families, riggers, and naval mechanics out of employ, will engage in this service under a local commander of capacity and influence, when they will not engage for the regular naval service.

As rank in our naval service can only be attained by regular gradation, commanders of talents, local knowledge, influence, and distinguished courage, cannot be commissioned for this service under the present regulations. The necessity of the case, from the reasons which I have assigned, has induced the employment of a few acting officers with command, but without rank, in two of the most important situations, viz.: New York harbor, and the Chesapeake bay. These appointments appear to have given great confidence in these districts, and the success in recruiting for the service on these stations, considering the unequal competition of the military and private service, has been favorable.

I would, therefore, take the liberty of suggesting the utility of providing by law, for the appointment of four captains, with the same relative rank and authority in the flotilla service, and the same pay and emoluments, as captains in the navy; and twelve lieutenants, with the same relative rank and authority in the flotilla service, and the same pay and emoluments, as lieutenants in the navy; but limited to the temporary employment of

the flotilla without rank in the navy, other than in the flotilla in which they may serve, and subject only to the orders of the president of the United States; in all other respects to be governed by the rules and regulations provided for the government of the navy.

There is an object of great importance, to which I could have wished to draw your attention. I mean the reorganization of the navy department; for the necessity of which, no one can be more sensible than myself; but, really, my faculties have been so closely engaged with the multifarious objects, and the current and incessant labors of the department, during a period of the most active and important operations, that I have had no leisure to deliberate upon, and digest a system satisfactory to myself, or such as I can present to you at this time. And, as it is better to labor with known evils than to hazard a premature and inadequate system, I have thought it best to postpone the subject for the present, respectfully submitting, however, to the wisdom of congress to revise the system if it shall deem it now necessary.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully, sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. JONES.

Honorable John Gaillard, chairman

of the naval committee of the senate.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

MARCH 4th, 1814.

SIR,

Agreeably to your intimation I have the honor to transmit, herewith, a list of the ships and vessels of the navy of the United States, with the rate, station, and name of the commander of each.

I am, very respectfully,

Sir, your obedient servant,

W. JONES.

The honorable John Gaillard, chairman
of the naval committee of the senate.

LIST of the naval force of the United States.

	NAMES.	VESSELS.	RATES.	STATIONS.	COMMANDERS.	RANK.
1	-----		74	Building at Portsmouth, New Hampshire	-----	
2	-----		74	Building at Charlestown, Massachusetts	-----	
3	-----		74	Building at Philadelphia	-----	
4	President	Frigate	44	New York	John Rodgers	Captain.
5	United States		44	New London	Stephen Decatur	Ditto.
6	Constitution		44	Cruising	Charles Stewart	Ditto.
7	Guerriere		44	Building at Philadelphia		
8	Java		44	Building at Baltimore		
9	Columbia		44	Building at Washington		
10	Constellation		36	Norfolk, under sailing orders	Charles Gordon	Ditto.
11	Congress		36	Portsmouth, New Hampshire, fitting	John Smith	Ditto.
12	Macedonian		36	New London	Jacob Jones	Ditto.
13	Essex		32	Cruising	David Porter	Ditto.
14	Adams	Corvette	24	Cruising	Charles Morris	Ditto.
15	John Adams		24	Cartel to Gottenburg	Samuel Angus	Master commandant.
16	Alert	Sloop	18	New York (guard ship)		
17	Hornet		18	New London	James Biddle	Ditto.
18	Wasp		18	Portsmouth, New Hampshire, under sailing orders	Johnston Blakely	Ditto.
19	Frolic		18	Cruising	Joseph Bainbridge	Ditto.
20	Peacock		18	New York, under sailing orders	Lewis Warrington	Ditto.
21	Eric		18	Baltimore, ready for sea	Charles G. Ridgely	Ditto.
22	Ontario		18	Baltimore	Robert T. Spence	Ditto.
23	Argus		18	Washington, fitting for sea		
24	Louisiana		16	New Orleans	Daniel T. Patterson	Master com. commanding officer.
25	Essex junior		16	Cruising	John Downs	Master commandant.
26	Greenwich		16	Cruising		
27	Etna Bomb	Brig		New Orleans		
28	Troup		16	Savannah (guard ship)		
29	Siren		16	Cruising	George Parker	Ditto.
30	Rattlesnake		14	Cruising	John O. Creighton	Ditto.
31	Enterprise		14	Cruising	James Renshaw	Lieutenant commandant.
32	Carolina	Schooner	14	Charleston, S. C.	John D. Henley	Master commandant.
33	Nonsuch		14	Charleston, S. C.	Laurence Kearney	Lieutenant commandant.

United States' naval force on the Lakes.

	NAMES.	VESSELS.	GUNS.	STATIONS.	COMMANDERS.	RANK.
1	General Pike	Ship	24	Lake Ontario	Isaac Chauncey	Commodore.
2	Madison		20		William M. Crane	Master commandant.
3	Oneida	Brig	16		Thomas Brown	Lieutenant commandant.
4	Sylph	Schooner	14		M. T. Woolsey	Master commandant.
5	Governor Tompkins		6		St. Clair Elliott	Midshipman commandant.
6	Hamilton		8			
7	Growler		5			
8	Pert		3			
9	Conquest		3		Samuel W. Adams	Lieutenant commandant.
10	Fair American		2		Henry Wells	Ditto.
11	Ontario		2		Wolcott Chauncey	Ditto.
12	Asp		2		John Stevens	Sailing master.
13	Julia		2		Philander A. Jones	Lieutenant commandant.
14	Elizabeth		2			
15	Lady of the Lake		1			
16	Mary	Bomb			Mervine P. Mix	Sailing master.
17	Lawrence	Brig	18	Lake Erie	Jesse D. Elliott	Master com. commanding officer.
18	Niagara		13			
19	Detroit	Ship	20			
20	Queen Charlotte		20			
21	Hunter	Brig	10	[Captured from the enemy]		
22	Lady Prevost	Sloop	12			
23	Caledonia	Brig	2			
24	Ariel	Schooner	4			
25	Sommers		2			
26	Scorpion		2			
27	Porcupine		1			
28	Tygress		1			
29	President	Sloop	8	Lake Champlain	Thomas Macdonough	Master com. commanding officer.
30	Montgomery		8			
31	Commodore Preble		8			

Gunboats, barges, &c.

STATIONS.	GUNBOATS.	BARGES EQUIPPED.	BARGES BUILDING.	ARMED VESSELS ATTACHED TO STATIONS AND FLOTILLAS.	COMMANDERS.	RANK.
New Orleans	6		5	Schooners Flying Fish, Sea Horse, and sloop Tickler		
Georgia	5		6			
Charleston, S. C.	2	6	6	Schooner Alligator	Thomas N. Gautier	Acting lieutenant.
Wilmington, N. C.	6	1	6		Joseph Tarbell	Captain commanding.
Norfolk	23	1	10	1 bomb		
Potomac	3	3	1	Schooners Scorpion, Hornet, and cutter Asp		
Baltimore	1	15	10	1 pilot boat	Flotilla	
Delaware	19	6		2 block sloops, and 1 schooner	Flotilla	
New York	38					
Lake Champlain	2	2	15			
New London	2					
Newport, R. I.	7					
New Bedford	2					
Boston	2					
Newburyport	2					
Portsmouth, N. H.	0					
	126	32	59	11 armed vessels.		

NAVY DEPARTMENT, MARCH 4, 1814.

W. JONES.

